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Year 2000 compliance issue

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

This report responds to the request of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/53/513, para. 16) that the United Nations Secretariat coordinate the preparation of a report by the United Nations Administration and all the administrations of the funds and programmes mentioned in paragraph 1 of the above-mentioned report on the progress made with respect to the year 2000 compliance issue. The report presents information on this subject from the United Nations Secretariat, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

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1. In paragraph 16 of its report on financial reports and audited statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (A/53/513), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions requested the United Nations Administration and all the administrations of the funds and programmes mentioned in paragraph 1 of the above-mentioned report[1] to report to it by May 1999 on the progress made with respect to the year 2000 (Y2K) compliance issue. The Advisory Committee further requested the United Nations Secretariat to coordinate the preparation of the report.

2. The present report has been prepared accordingly. Information is provided on measures taken or to be taken to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, including a timetable where appropriate.

United Nations

3. The following management structure was set up to oversee the Organization's efforts to manage the Y2K issue:

(a) A Year 2000 management group, composed of senior managers (under-secretaries-general or assistant secretaries-general) and chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Management, was established in February 1999 to provide the Secretariat with policy guidance and oversight, with the participation of selected Funds and Programmes. Priority is given to mission-critical operations of the Organization to ensure that they will continue to be operational after 1 January 2000, irrespective of outside constraints;

(b) The Year 2000 Management Group is supported by a year 2000 team, an interdepartmental task force coordinating Y2K issues in the areas of information technology, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian affairs, economic and social affairs, development cooperation, security and safety, facility management and legal, financial and administrative issues. The Team identifies mission-critical operations for the Organization as a whole, coordinates the development of contingency plans for those mission-critical operations where there is a risk of failure and encourages sharing of efforts, exchange of materials and the review of current and best practices with organizations of the United Nations system;

(c) It is programme managers, not the Year 2000 Team, who continue to have the responsibility for the planning and effort necessary to ensure that their operations will not be compromised by or otherwise can adequately respond to problems associated with the Y2K problem. Additionally, neither the Year 2000 Management Group nor the Team can be responsible for supporting the efforts of Member States to address the potential impact of the Year 2000 problem on them.

4. The United Nations engaged the services of a specialized consultant to conduct a Y2K risk assessment study for its telecommunications and computing infrastructure as well as business applications at United Nations Headquarters. During the first phase of the Y2K Risk Assessment Study (completed in March 1999), the consultant was required to establish an inventory of business applications and telecommunications and computing components subject to Y2K risk. A total of 131 business applications were inventoried, of which 76 have been identified as important for the day-to-day running of the Organization. Of these important applications, fully 37 have been determined to be Y2K non-compliant. Seventeen of the non-compliant applications were determined to be mission-critical in nature. Of these 17 non-compliant, mission-critical applications, six are financial applications, including payroll, insurance billing and check printing; five are revenue-producing applications, including the optical disk, visitor registration and megastamp systems; two are enterprise systems, including the system for scheduling interpretation, recording of documentation, information tracking, the United Nations pass and identification system and the Permanent Missions' staff database. In the second phase of the exercise, programmed for completion by 30 June 1999, the consultant will use specialized software tools to examine the inventory items for potential Y2K problems and will issue a risk assessment report to this effect with recommended remedial actions and resources estimates. After the completion of the risk assessment study, a complete United Nations Headquarters Y2K status will be maintained by the Year 2000 Team, which will report to the Year 2000 Management Group on a monthly basis. In early June 1999, programme managers were provided with a format of the status report that they have been requested to forward monthly to the Y2K Team as of 1 August 1999.

5. With respect to embedded systems/microprocessors, a letter was sent in February 1999 to all business partners, service and infrastructure providers requesting certificates of compliance for all equipment, systems and services and requesting assurance that, in case they were not Y2K-compliant, that the supplier/service providers were taking the necessary actions to achieve Y2K conformity and had a contingency plan to resolve any problem. As of the date of the present report, about half the Organization's business partners responded. Those who have not yet responded are regularly contacted and a half-day seminar was organized

with our major vendors on 25 May 1999. At that seminar, the power and steam supplier gave formal assurances that they had been fully Y2K-compliant since 31 December 1998 and had carried out tests that showed that there would not be Y2K-induced power outages. The same applied to the steam supply, which would be compliant by mid-1999. With respect to elevators, the vendor informed us that their functioning was not date-dependent but that nonetheless they had been satisfactorily tested; moreover, an employee from the company will be on-site in case of any malfunction. The Facilities Management Division has completed an assessment study of all embedded building equipment and systems, floor by floor, building by building. Detailed contingency plans were finalized at the end of May 1999. Testing took place from 15 June to 31 July 1999. Required staff were informed to avoid, to the extent possible, scheduling vacations between 20 December 1999 and 7 January 2000.

6. The new Y2K-compliant version of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) (3.4.3) was tested during the month of June and was programmed for introduction in July 1999.

7. An information circular on potential problems associated with the transition to the year 2000 (ST/IC/1999/34) was issued on 29 April 1999. The circular was also posted on the Intranet at all duty stations as well as on the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) discussion site on Y2K issues for easy access by organizations of the United Nations system.

8. The Year 2000 Team will coordinate the development of contingency plans for each of the principal mission-critical operations where there is a risk of failure. The Team has prepared a template for such contingency plans which was circulated to departments and to Offices away from Headquarters by 30 June 1999.

9. Offices away from Headquarters were contacted and guidance provided on matters such as the Y2K management structure to be put in place, identification of mission-critical activities and establishment of a work programme. A network of Y2K focal points was activated and information provided to them, including: a Y2K strategy for Offices away from Headquarters; a background note on the management structure at Headquarters; guidelines developed by the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) to ensure that all information technology components procured by the United Nations are Y2K-compliant and three model letters to utilities providers, vendors and landlords requesting information on compliance. Field visits were carried out to several duty stations (Addis Ababa, Arusha, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna and Santiago).

10. With respect to inter-agency cooperation, in November 1998 the Secretary-General drew the attention of all members of ACC to relevant parts of General Assembly resolution 52/233 of 26 June 1998 on the global implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers and suggested that the Y2K issue be put on the agenda of the next high-level meeting of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ). At that meeting, which took place in New York on 12 March 1999, the state of preparedness of members of the United Nations system was reviewed and it was agreed that system-wide coordinated approaches were needed location by location to deal with:

(a) Contingency planning (including crisis management);

(b) Logistics (particularly for field-oriented organizations);

(c) Financial matters (payroll and banking matters);

(d) Personnel matters (including issues related to security and safety);

(e) Telecommunications.

Lead agencies were identified to carry out these actions and an informal network of senior managers was created through CCAQ to share efforts, exchange materials and review current and best practices. At its spring session, in April 1999, the ACC adopted a statement by the executive heads of the United Nations system on Y2K prepared by the high-level meeting of CCAQ.

11. In order to address the security issues which might arise as a result of Y2K-related problems, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator requested the designated official and security management teams at all duty stations where United Nations staff were present to conduct a risk assessment and impact analysis, indicating what areas they believed could be affected. Information was requested regarding electrical power, communications, transportation, oil and gas, water supply, financial services, payment systems, life safety, possibility of insecurity and impact on humanitarian assistance. The Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator will review the risk assessment and impact analysis for each duty station and make specific recommendations regarding what steps can be taken to mitigate the security impact on United Nations personnel.

12. Duty stations were also requested to develop contingency plans to deal with any eventuality. Designated

officials have been requested, *inter alia*, to update their security plans:

(a) To take into account Y2K scenarios;

(b) To update their lists of staff and dependants at the duty station;

(c) To establish a small crisis management team to deal with security matters;

(d) To develop alternative means of communications;

(e) To ensure that staff members have been briefed regarding precautions to be taken to prepare for possible Y2K-related difficulties.

In addition, a travel advisory has been issued to all staff regarding problems which they may encounter should they choose to travel over this period.

International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

13. A detailed inventory of all computer hardware, software and applications has been carried out. Surveys have been undertaken for all ITC databases, including for new hardware platforms and software to be installed. The Y2K compliance status of each item of hardware and software has been determined and remedies and test methods have been defined. Actions to be undertaken have been prioritized. As a result of these actions, the ITC technical infrastructure have been either upgraded or completed with a series of hardware and software which are all Y2K-compliant. Furthermore, mainframe applications are being migrated to Windows NT platforms. A "master disk image" is being created on a local area network (LAN) server for each type of personal computer being installed at ITC. This "image" incorporates all software upgrades to the Y2K-compliant status.

14. In September 1999, it is planned that the "master disk image" will be replicated on every personal computer. The migration of mainframe applications is expected to continue until the end of the year, with remaining applications being migrated to the new International Computing Centre (ICC) mainframe, which is Y2K-compliant.

United Nations University

15. The United Nations University has made an assessment of the Y2K problem in consultation with its research and training centres and programmes located in different parts of the world. The assessment has convinced UNU that it will be minimally affected by the Y2K problem.

16. UNU has analysed its information systems and identified which items had to be converted or replaced in order to be Y2K-compliant. Conversion of platforms and interfaces will be completed before September 1999. With regard to other systems, such as telecommunications systems and building infrastructure, adjustments had already been made to the UNU headquarters building management and security control system in January 1999, with remaining adjustments programmed to be carried out before September 1999.

United Nations Development Programme

17. Following the decision of the UNDP Executive Committee, a Y2K task force under the coordination of the Operations Support Group has been set up at headquarters to: (a) protect UNDP funds; (b) promote UNDP-wide contingency planning; (c) monitor the state of preparedness at headquarters and country offices; and (d) facilitate internal and inter-agency coordination. The Task Force reports on the Y2K status of country offices and headquarters on a regular basis to the UNDP Executive Committee. UNDP is actively contributing to management of the Y2K challenge through the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO) and the resident coordinator system. A comprehensive Web site has been created to inform the country offices on Y2K-related matters. (This information, together with some diagnostic tools, has also been distributed to all country offices on CD-ROMs.) In addition, a UNDP Y2K help desk has been in operation since April 1999. Y2K focal points have been designated in country offices and at the end of June 1999 the Associate Administrator sent a comprehensive letter to all UNDP resident representatives, raising their awareness on Y2K and underscoring the need for timely submission of country office contingency plans.

18. Firm arrangements have also been made for UNDP participation and coordination with CCAQ committees, Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, the Economic and Social Council Working Group on Informatics, UNOPS, United Nations Population Fund and inter-agency discussion groups on Y2K.

19. Risk assessment for computer hardware and software has been completed for 80 country offices and headquarters. An average of $20,000 was, or will be, assigned to each of the remaining offices to make their technology systems

Y2K-compliant. UNDP corporate software packages, such as finance accounting, have been rewritten and tested for Y2K compliance, and IMIS is awaiting United Nations Y2K certification.[2] It is planned that, by the end of September 1999, all UNDP country offices will be at a stage where Y2K will not have any serious impact on the office's internal operations.

20. Risk assessment for the banking systems at the country office level has been completed for 59 countries, and responses from other countries are awaited. Risk assessment of external factors is being looked at in conjunction with Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator requested United Nations system-wide contingency planning as well as national preparedness plans carried out by the Y2K national coordinators. This will be an ongoing process until December and will be addressed in the context of contingency planning against possible failures in each sector.

21. It is planned that an event management centre will be established at UNDP headquarters in October 1999 to meet expected increased queries from country offices on mitigation measures.

22. UNDP country offices are responding to the requests from the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator for contingency planning. An analysis of the magnitude of risks for each country office will be made in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and United Nations agencies concerned.

23. In consultation with the regional bureaux, a list of the most mission-critical functions that must be maintained at the country-office level to sustain UNDP operations is being compiled. The responsibilities for different mitigating measures, such as front load procurement for critical projects, advance purchase of office supplies, increased level of advances to cover unusual expenditures, identification of projects to be placed on hold, and management of personnel leave plans have been entrusted to line departments/offices concerned.

United Nations Children's Fund

24. The activities of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) related to Y2K preparedness may be summed up as follows:

(a) Identification, documentation and circulation of all appropriate firmware and operating systems-related upgrades or fixes for all computer equipment utilized by UNICEF offices worldwide;

(b) Identification, documentation and circulation of all appropriate software patches or fixes for all standard office applications utilized by UNICEF offices worldwide;

(c) Implementation of a plan for replacing non-compliant corporate systems with compliant systems;

(d) Publication of continuing updates on the status of Y2K compliance and certification by the vendors of information technology products and services which UNICEF uses;

(e) Preparation of a "live test" plan involving three Headquarters locations, regional offices and a selected number of field offices covering data interfaces among applications to be executed from 29 July to 2 August 1999 in order to verify compliance at all levels;

(f) UNICEF has engaged the various institutions (such as banks, service providers, suppliers) with whom it does business in an awareness process with a view to identifying the potential risks and developing some form of contingency plan;

(g) Instructions to field offices regarding working with the United Nations resident coordinator system to assess the in-country risks for business continuity and staff security, and to take action as appropriate, are currently being finalized;

(h) Consultation with UNDP regarding cash planning and management in field offices are ongoing. Training sessions for new representatives and other senior officers from the field in 1998–1999 have included discussions of the security implications of Y2K, including giving them information developed by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator;

(i) Security visits to the field during 1998–1999 have highlighted the security risks and actions that can be taken to alleviate the Y2K problem;

(j) Each UNICEF country office will be asked to report what security-related/continuity of operations actions the United Nations community in the country is taking, as well as what actions the UNICEF office itself is taking;

(k) All UNICEF country offices will have at least one functioning satellite telephone by the fall of 1999, and its functioning will be tested recurrently;

(l) The UNICEF Operations Centre will be on high alert for Y2K-related crises before the end of 1999 and as long into 2000 as necessary.

United Nations Population Fund

25. With a view to preparing the UNFPA staff for potential Y2K-related problems, an information session has been held to inform them of the nature of the Y2K issue, its coverage in the media and what UNFPA is doing about it. Additional sessions are planned to keep staff fully informed of the readiness status of the Fund for the year 2000. A circular has been sent out to the field offices informing them of the potential of the Y2K issue and how they should prepare themselves.

26. With regard to hardware and software, UNFPA has six Sun computers running Solaris software. A special Y2K diagnostic test provided by the manufacturer was run on each of these servers in order to detect the non-Y2K-compliant elements in these computers. The test identified not only the non-compliant elements and modules but also what patches were necessary to make the computers Y2K-compliant. The process of installing the patches on these computers is ongoing and all these computers are planned to be Y2K-compliant by 15 July 1999. UNFPA also has four Novell servers that are non-compliant and are being decommissioned. Other Novell servers require patches, which were identified and acquired and were scheduled for installation during the first week of July 1999. In addition, UNFPA has some 300 personal computers, which have all been tested for Y2K compliance. The basic input/output system (BIOS) on some were found to be non-compliant. All of these computers have been made Y2K-compliant. UNFPA's major application at headquarters, PRMS was tested for compliance and was found to be compliant. UNFPA uses Netscape SuiteSpot for its messaging (e-mail), scheduling (calendar functions) and Web service. Some of the modules are not totally Y2K-compliant. These modules are currently being upgraded. UNFPA uses Siemens Saturn IIe PABX that has been found not to be Y2K-compliant. UNFPA uses Octel voice-mail system, which is not Y2K-compliant.

27. A Y2K test will be carried out at UNFPA. All systems at headquarters will be tested. The systems that are known to be non-compliant will be tested to see what will be the consequence of the non-compliance. The systems having been identified as compliant will also be tested in order to verify and document the compliance.

28. All UNFPA field offices have been sent software to enable them to check all personal computers and servers for compliance. Individual country offices are taking steps to rectify their non-compliant situations regarding computer hardware and software. The main UNFPA application in the field offices, UNIFOS, has been successfully tested for Y2K compliance.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

29. With respect to information technology, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has identified all required Y2K compliance activities and an amount of $650,000 has been determined as the cost of implementation. The scheduled completion date for Y2K compliance certification for all systems is 30 September 1999. All activities are currently on schedule.

30. The vast majority of equipment containing microprocessors, such as telephone switches, fax machines, photocopiers and elevators, has now been verified as not being affected by Y2K. Those few items of equipment that need to be upgraded to achieve Y2K compliance have been identified and action is scheduled for completion by 30 September 1999.

31. All banks at which UNRWA holds accounts are being requested to confirm their Y2K readiness. Suppliers are also being contacted for the same purpose. Wherever on-line systems are in use, it has been determined that they are Y2K-compliant.

32. Circulars have been issued to all staff alerting them to the Y2K issue. Members of the security management team are liaising with the designated officials in the UNRWA area of operations with respect to contingency planning in the event of civil unrest and the failure of essential services.

United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

33. The management structure for dealing with Y2K comprises a steering committee (the Technological Innovations Committee, composed of representatives of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) with knowledge of information technology and a broad base of understanding of the operation of the organizations) which monitors progress and advises senior management on required action and a Year 2000 Task Force dealing with Y2K compliance and contingency planning. The Task Force established a

five-stage plan of action (awareness, management framework, inventory and assessment, implementation and contingency) addressing the needs of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, UNEP and Habitat, as well as those of their outposted offices. Other United Nations bodies operating in Kenya (particularly UNICEF, UNDP and the World Food Programme (WFP)) have been approached to see where joint action might be taken.

34. While an inventory of all information technology hardware, software, in-house applications and items with embedded microprocessors has been completed for the United Nations Office at Nairobi, UNEP and Habitat at Nairobi, it is still ongoing for outposted offices of UNEP and Habitat. The same applies to the inventory of all external suppliers, as well as of contracts/licences (completed for Nairobi, ongoing for outposted offices). The list of interfaces between internal systems and that between internal and external systems was completed in April 1999. Mission-critical systems were identified at Nairobi on 1 March 1999 and the inventory prioritized. External consultants were engaged and are carrying out software fixes. Letters were sent in March 1999 to the power, telecommunication and banking providers, as well as to hospitals, the Nairobi City Council, the Commissary and the International Air Transport Association.

35. The United Nations Office at Nairobi, UNEP and Habitat standardized on Windows 95 for OS functions, Microsoft 97 for basic office applications and Pegasus 3.1 for electronic mail. The conversion of mission-critical payroll and accounting applications is under way and is expected to be completed by mid-September 1999. Plans are under way to replace the mission-critical procurement software. About 500 computers have been procured to replace existing non-compliant stock and are expected to be distributed by September 1999. Mission-critical servers have been upgraded to attain Y2K compliance. Plans are under way to upgrade the LAN, with Y2K-compliant hardware and software. The PABX system is compliant and plans are under way to upgrade the voice mail system to attain compliance.

36. The Task Force aims at completing by the end of July an assessment of systems that are likely to be affected because they will not be fixed in time. Contingency plans will then be drawn up and adjusted constantly in the light of monitoring of actions of the Kenya Y2K coordination committee and the contingency plans that it is drawing up. In addition, these actions will be coordinated by a special inter-agency task force which will come into operation in July 1999.

The Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

37. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) reports that all information systems under its responsibility have been made Y2K-compliant. UNDCP began this process in 1993 by re-engineering its information systems and purchasing both new hardware and corporate software packages. Today, its hardware and operating system and the major corporate software packages it operates are guaranteed Y2K-compliant by the vendors.

38. Administration of UNDCP, including computer networks and LAN services (hardware and software components) is under the responsibility of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

United Nations Office for Project Services

39. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has completed the inventory and compliance review of its internal information systems (hardware and software) at headquarters, two decentralized offices and one outpost. Inventories from two decentralized offices and two outposts are awaited. All corporate information systems have been checked and are, where necessary, being rewritten to ensure Y2K compliance. Y2K certification of all UNOPS systems at headquarters, decentralized offices and outposts will be concluded in October. Y2K certification for the Chrysler Building, where UNOPS will move in September, has been ascertained from the Chrysler Building management. With regard to IMIS, United Nations Y2K certification is awaited.[3]

40. Together with UNDP, UNOPS has prepared a Web-based Y2K information package to assist UNOPS offices and projects in identifying and mitigating Y2K risks. The information is distributed via CD-ROMs together with some diagnostic tools and made available via the UNOPS Intranet site.

41. Contingency plans and directions to assist UNOPS offices and projects in mitigating Y2K risks are currently being prepared. Directives will be given out accordingly and relevant information will be made available on-line and via CD-ROMs.

42. To ensure a due review of its internal Y2K efforts and to protect the interests of its clients, UNOPS has established a Y2K advisory group.

Notes

[1] The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements Foundation (Habitat), the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

[2] See paragraph 6 above.

[3] See paragraph 6 above.